

ERIN MCKELVY: Hello, good morning. My name is Erin McKelvy. I live on my grandparents' farm in Blacksburg, Virginia. And I appreciate the opportunity to come here today even though I had to get up early to do so. I'm also appreciative of the pause on new coal leases during this review process. I would love to see that expanded, and encourage you all emphatically to terminate all coal leases on federal lands. That is the gist of what I'm trying to say, period. There is no other alternative in line with the reality of climate change. And the Department of the Interior must be part of the rising tide of effort to turn away from fossil fuels and embrace the technological and social future that we need to survive as a planet. Folks have said it already, but the more subsidies through the form of federal leases and through the form of externalized costs that are given to the fossil industry, the slower the transition is going to be, and we don't have that time to spare. The inflated value of coal, even though it has played a valuable role or an undeniable role in history, is slowing down the process that needs to happen. Right as I was leaving home yesterday afternoon, the farmers were putting up hay. I live in an area that has both embraced the, you know, contemporary trends and technological innovation and education and science, but also one with deep agricultural roots. And both of those fields of human endeavor rely on a stable climate and on ecosystem functions that are made possible through the forests and prairies and watersheds that are partially protected by federal lands and also long since underneath the jurisdiction of federal treaties that the Department of Interior needs to take a part in honoring. Without predictable rainfall and temperature, without clean water, without clean air, none of these things, neither looking to the past for our roots nor looking to the future through innovation, are going to be possible. And these studies, these estimated decades of recoverable reserves are a fiction, because that recoverability might take place on economic terms, but if we want as a species to be able to survive and thrive into the coming centuries, all those fossil fuels need to stay in the ground. We need to make that transition right now to alternative fuel sources and alternative models of human organization on federal lands, tribal lands, all places. So, people want to work, and the best path to doing so is through reclamation jobs, and I encourage the Department of the Interior to play your part in helping make that possible. Thank you.